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INFO RHMFISS/ACCIS LANGLEY AFB VA
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 0021
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RHMFISS/COMSOCCENT MACDILL AFB FL
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDHP/DIA DHP-1 WASHINGTON DC
RUETIAA/DIRNSA FT GEORGE G MEADE MD
RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA PRIORITY 0024
RUEHFT/AMCONSUL FRANKFURT PRIORITY 0596
RHEFSNG/HMSNG WASHINGTON DC
RUEOBBA/HQ USCENAF SHAW AFB SC
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RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 1673
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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 1627
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RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1600
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
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RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1471
RHEFLGX/SAFE WASHINGTON DC
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY 0645
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1417
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RUEHTA/USDAO ALMATY KZ
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RUEHMO/USDAO MOSCOW
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SUBJECT: TAJIK FOREIGN MINISTER NAZAROV ON INCREASING REGIONAL INTRIGUE

CLASSIFIED BY: THOMAS ARMBRUSTER, CDA, FRONT OFFICE , State.
REASON: 1.4 (a), (b), (d)

1. (S) In a 'just between us' session with the Ambassador on July 6, Foreign Minister Talbak Nazarov offered a litany of challenges to Tajikistan's regional foreign policy and even sovereignty. The meeting was ostensibly to preview Secretary Rumsfeld's July 10-11 visit with President Rahmonov, but Nazarov

is clearly focusing on much more than the U.S.-Tajik bilateral relationship.

¶2. (S) The intrigue begins with neighboring Uzbekistan. Nazarov expects a "provocation" any day, because of Uzbek dissatisfaction with Tajikistan's increasingly close relationship with the United States, Tajik debt to Uzbekistan, the threat of Tajik hydropower controlling regional water and energy resources, and previous regional commitments to begin a visa-free regime with Tajikistan. Uzbekistan is suspected by some to have been behind a number of incidents including a deadly attack on a Tajik border post and a harmless, if noisy late-night series of small downtown explosions some weeks ago. Nazarov believes Uzbekistan could follow Russia's lead and cut off gas supplies to Tajikistan as well, just as Russia has to show displeasure with Kiev and Tblisi. President Rahmonov and Uzbek President Karimov apparently lost ground at a recent meeting in Sochi, with Karimov promising to cut off roads to Tajikistan if the TadAz aluminum plant expands and if RusAl actually builds Rogun dam and hydropower station.

¶3. (S) But it is Russian propaganda, covert activities, and diplomatic pressure that Nazarov admits will complicate any U.S. proposal for increased military engagement in Tajikistan. He described a diplomatic flap started by an article attributed to Deputy Russian Foreign Minister Karasin. Karasin was reported to have cautioned that the Americans were preparing to offer Tajikistan "hundreds of millions of dollars" for a U.S. base. The Tajiks protested with a dipnote that the Russians demanded be withdrawn. Tajik - Russian relations have been off kilter ever since the Russians (and Uzbeks we learned) pressured other countries not to attend the U.S.- sponsored counternarcotics

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conference held in Dushanbe in May. All of this makes for a "very complicated situation" according to Nazarov. Tajikistan also has to consider its commitments to regional powers to CIS bodies to which it belongs (like CSTO and EEC) and to consult with regional before entering into new security arrangements.

¶4. (S) Nazarov said all Central Asian leaders would be called to Moscow in July and again to a meeting in Sochi in August for "consultative meetings" with President Putin. When the Ambassador noted Tajikistan is a sovereign country and can make its own decisions, Nazarov smiled and said, "no one is really sovereign yet."

¶5. (S) COMMENT: At the end of the day, Tajikistan's own fundamental interests include a stable and prosperous Afghanistan, something the United States is working hard to ensure and that Russia has only a limited interest in. As President Rahmonov's Foreign Policy Adviser told the Ambassador, Tajikistan welcomes the issue of further U.S. military engagement in Tajikistan, but behind the scenes there will be many long discussions until the President himself declares his intentions, if indeed Tajikistan is asked.HOAGLAND